

# PRINCIPLES FOR ENERGY PROSPERITY

## *Helping Consumers, Promoting Growth & Protecting the Environment!*

*After 6 years of energy inaction from the Republican Congress, the Bush Administration is following the same tired old GOP plan: cast blame, insist on extreme anti-environmental proposals, and declare themselves powerless to do anything to provide immediate relief to Americans facing record-breaking energy price increases. In contrast, Democrats believe in a balanced, comprehensive and cost-effective energy program that fully meets America's energy needs through increased production and efficiency, that puts the interests of consumers first, and that encourages further advances in protecting the environment.*

**I. HELPING CONSUMERS TODAY:** President Bush claims there is nothing he can do to help Americans suffering through record high power bills, record high gas prices, and electricity blackouts. **Democrats believe the American people deserve answers – not excuses.** We support multiple steps for helping consumers NOW:

- *Western Electricity:* Stop unreasonable wholesale electricity prices by re-imposing limits on allowable charges based on the cost of providing electric power. Order refunds of illegal overcharges that have already occurred.
- *Gasoline Nationwide:* President Bush should fulfill his campaign promise and tell OPEC “We expect you to open your spigots!” President Bush should disavow his current unilateral disarmament policy, and tell OPEC that he will use the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to protect America from manipulation of energy markets. President Bush and the GOP Congress need to investigate price gouging by the biggest energy companies and take steps to protect consumers.
- *Energy Efficiency Now:* Democrats propose – beginning this year – a \$4,000 “BEST” tax credit for consumers, and “SAVE” investment incentive for businesses, to improve energy efficiency, to use renewable energy, or to buy hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.
- *Helping the Elderly and Children:* Democrats call for emergency funding to help low- and fixed-income families meet the rising cost of home heating and cooling bills. We also call for emergency funds to help public schools that are being forced to layoff teachers due to high energy costs.

**II. LONG TERM ENERGY SAVINGS:** In the past 25 years, America has saved or produced FOUR TIMES more energy through efficiency and renewable generation than was produced from other new sources. Democrats propose to extend our efficiency and renewable energy tax proposals for ten years – saving money for American families and making American business more competitive. Democrats support increased low-income energy assistance, increased weatherization, and flexible new approaches to financing home efficiency improvements.

**III. INCREASING ENERGY PRODUCTION:** Democrats are committed to a policy of increased energy production and the environmentally sound use of ALL energy sources. Democrats support a significant new tax incentive and public investment program to increase production from renewables. We also recognize that traditional energy sources – like natural gas, crude oil, and coal – will continue to meet the majority of our energy needs for the foreseeable future.

**Democrats are committed to a policy of increased production and the environmentally sound use of traditional energy supplies.** We support continued production of energy on public lands in accordance with the environmental protections followed by the Clinton Administration – which produced more energy from public lands than the previous Bush or Reagan Administrations. Democrats believe we need to provide greater market stability in the oil and gas industry to help maintain and increase domestic production, and to deter wild price swings that hurt American families. **We support tax policies that promote domestic production, exploration, efficient transport and processing of gas and oil.**

**IV. PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT:** The Bush Administration is dividing Americans when it pits our energy needs against our most important environmental protections. **Democrats know that America can preserve the environment while increasing energy production – if we reject the extreme anti-environmentalism of many Republican proposals.** Democrats believe in protecting our wilderness areas, providing incentives to reduce pollutants in our air like CO<sub>2</sub>. We call for improving the fuel efficiency of SUV's, light trucks and minivans. We call on the United States to continue to be a world leader in international talks to combat global warming.

**V. LEADING ON ENERGY:** The federal government – as America's largest consumer of energy – must be an energy leader by cutting its energy bills and using new technology. The federal government should set targets for capping and cutting its energy use, become a leading purchaser of new hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles, and increase investment in transportation programs like mass transit that lower energy costs and improve the quality of life in our communities.

**VI. INVESTING IN THE FUTURE:** America has long been the world leader in developing new energy technologies. Unfortunately, the Bush energy budget guts critical programs that encourage cutting edge research on renewable energy and energy efficiency. **Democrats strongly believe that we need to invest in keeping our technological lead in energy efficiency,** that we need to direct the National Academy of Sciences to investigate cost-effective ways in which America can become more energy efficient. We also believe we need to invest in finding ways to increase energy production and to use fossil fuels and other currently utilized energy technologies in the most environmentally responsible manner that we can.